


Tiger Talk

In Depth

Welcome back for a brand new year!



News from the Murray Avenue School PTA/Summer 2009

2009/2010 PTA Executive Board



Back row (L to R) Debbie Hilden (VP Student Programs), Lizette Macaluso (Secretary), Lori Dente (VP Fundraising), Chris Hofstedt (VP Communications), Liz Paras (VP Faculty Relations), Gail Julie (VP Traffic, Health & Safety), Vicki Alcott (VP Parent Services). Front Row (L to R) Tracy Owen and Ann LoBue (Co-Presidents). Not pictured: Meg Bausano (Treasurer) and Suzanne Raved (SEPTA Representative).

We are pleased to present the 2009-2010 PTA Executive Board. The Executive Board consists of parent members nominated and elected by the PTA, along with two teachers who volunteer to serve two-year terms to represent the faculty interests and perspectives. The teachers on the Executive Board for 2009-2010 are Leigh-Ann Pieragostini (who is in the second year of her term) and Jacqueline Oliver (who is in the first year of her term). Each parent member chairs a committee in addition to other board responsibilities in order

Front Stairway Update

Many of you were aware that the exterior auditorium stairs on the Murray Avenue side of the school were closed at the end of the school year. At the time this newsletter went to print, the drainage issues leading to the closure were being addressed, and the steps were expected to re-open around the beginning of August.

PTA Volunteer Fair & First Meeting of the School Year

What: PTA Volunteer Fair and Meeting

When: Friday, September 25
 Volunteer Fair, 8:30 am
 Meeting, 9:15 am

Where: Murray Avenue Cafeteria

Why: Get involved and make a real difference in your child's school! Whatever your talents, interests and time constraints are, there is volunteer work that will suit you and that the PTA needs. At the Volunteer Fair, meet the committee chairs who will be available to describe and answer questions about the various volunteer activities. Then, at 9:15 am, the PTA will hold its first meeting of the school year, during which the proposed PTA budget for the 2009-2010 school year will be presented, discussed and voted upon by the members. We should all do our part to help make Murray great!

The following PTA committees need co-chairs. Please contact Vicki Alcott at 833-2159 or thealcotts@verizon.net for more information or to volunteer.

Fall Social, Murray Arts Festival, Murray Memories (Yearbook), and Bake Sale

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Tiger Talk

In Depth

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Special thanks to Officer Rui Sandiaes from the Town of Mamaroneck police department.

Many thanks to:

Principal Jennifer Monaco, PTA Co-Presidents Tracy Owen and Ann LoBue, and PTA Vice President Communications Chris Hofstedt for their contributions.

"Tiger Talk In Depth", a Murray Avenue PTA Tri-Annual Newsletter, is also available online at www.mamkschoolspta.org/murray
Questions? Call Jill Miller at 833-9770.

Murray Matters

A Letter from your PTA Co-Presidents

We hope you are enjoying your summer vacation and are savoring these last few weeks with your family before school begins. Too quickly the Murray doors will be open and the sound of little voices will fill the halls and playgrounds as friends unite.

Though summer has not yet ended, it is that time of year when the Murray PTA starts planning for the year ahead. There are many opportunities for parents and caregivers to get involved in the school and the educational experience of our children. The PTA is always in need of volunteers and there are many volunteer opportunities to choose from. Remember the PTA programs cannot happen without you the parents.

A big thankyou goes to our outgoing PTA board members for their hard work and many contributions over the past two years, and an enthusiastic welcome to our new executive board members and all committee chairs! A special thanks to our outgoing PTA co-president Kristine Budill for her dedication and outstanding leadership! And thank you to all Murray parents and families who contributed many hours to make 2008 – 2009 PTA programs successful.

We look forward to seeing you all in September!



Tracy Owen



Ann LoBue

Murray warmly welcomes the following new staff members:

Michelle Henry: Computer Lab
Lisa Moore: leave replacement for Audrey Goldenberg until 2/1/10
Dawn Kaplan: leave replacement for Anna Grippo until 12/4/09

Please note that Melanie Roth has changed her name to Melanie Arminio.

Free

NEW!!!!

Free

FALL ICE CREAM SOCIAL FOR TEACHERS AND FAMILIES

Friday September 11, 3:30 p.m. Large Playground

YUMMY **Come Meet, Mingle and Enjoy** YUMMY

Q & A: DRUG EDUCATION AT MURRAY

At Murray: D.A.R.E.

What is D.A.R.E.? D.A.R.E. (an acronym for Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is a drug abuse prevention education program taught to all 5th graders in Mamaroneck. D.A.R.E. was started in L.A. in 1983 in response to that city's problems with drug-related crimes, and is now used in over 75% of our country's school districts.

How does it differ from other similar programs? D.A.R.E.'s signature feature is that it is taught in a classroom setting by uniformed police officers. At Murray, it currently is taught by Officer Rui Sandiaes from the Town of Mamaroneck police department (who also teaches it at Central and Sts. John & Paul schools). An officer teaches D.A.R.E. at Chatsworth from the Larchmont Village police force and at Mamaroneck Avenue from the Village of Mamaroneck force. The participating officers undergo 80 hours of training in areas of child development, classroom management, teaching techniques, and communication skills. This training coupled with their experience as a cop gives them the unique ability to answer difficult questions about drugs and crime. A goal of D.A.R.E. is to create a positive atmosphere in which officers are "humanized" and viewed in a "helping" role in the hopes of creating long-term relationships with students.

What is the curriculum? D.A.R.E. is taught once per week for 17 weeks. The curriculum covers, among other things, the following topics: health consequences and abuse of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs (including marijuana, inhalants, stimulants and over-the-counter and prescription medications); the impact of advertising; dealing with strangers; internet safety; good decision making; peer pressure; developing confidence; bullying; stress; self-esteem; and positive role models.

How is the curriculum taught to the students? Information is conveyed via presentations, question and answer sessions and workbooks. The students often work in pairs or groups while using the workbooks, which facilitate discussions by having kids evaluate and respond to theoretical situations they may find themselves in. Officer Sandiaes also uses a lot of visual aids and props (e.g., posters showing the effects of tobacco or a particular drug on various organs in the body) which help the students process the material.

What is required to graduate? In addition to learning the material and completing the workbooks, students write an essay/report that they share with the class. The purpose of the essay/report is to express something they have learned in a personal way (i.e., without simply regurgitating facts). For example, some kids have focused on why they will not try cigarette smoking; other children have written poems, rap songs and puppet shows for their reports.

How does D.A.R.E. improve its curriculum? D.A.R.E. America, the national D.A.R.E. organization, is always evaluating and attempting to improve its training and curriculum. In addition, Officer Sandiaes is constantly updating his materials and visual aids based on new surveys on smoking and drug use, new information about internet safety, and newsworthy events. He has expanded and improved upon the basic D.A.R.E. curriculum so that our students get much more information than is

contained in the standard D.A.R.E. program (e.g., the standard program does not address stranger or internet safety). He also attempts to make the curriculum more "reality-based" (e.g., by explaining responsible drinking by adults and ways to try to quit smoking)—this is important because one of the criticisms leveled at D.A.R.E. is that it gives students messages that conflict with reality which reduces the effectiveness of the program and undermines its credibility.

How is D.A.R.E. financed? Officer Sandiaes's salary, as well as travel, lodging and related expenses incurred in connection with his training, is paid solely out of the Town of Mamaroneck's police department's budget. D.A.R.E. America establishes and pays the costs of his training program (and receives its funding from various federal, state and private sources).

Is there police-related drug education at the Hommocks? Although there is a national D.A.R.E. program for middle schools, as well as School Resource Officer programs (where a cop with specialized training is assigned full-time to a middle school as an educator and counselor in addition to a law enforcer), our middle school does not have any police drug educators.



What do our students think of D.A.R.E.? Jake, a Murray 5th grader, says "All the kids loved it, and Officer Rui really bonded with us. I learned a ton of stuff I didn't know before—like that over 200 chemicals are contained in cigarettes, how hard it is to quit smoking once you start, and not to mix alcohol with medicine. It made me not want to smoke or try drugs." Michael, another 5th grader, adds "Officer Rui taught us not only about drugs and alcohol but about internet dangers and dealing with peer pressure. He gave us a lot of good tips and information that will help us during our years at the Hommocks."

If you have any questions, or for more information on D.A.R.E., please call Officer Sandiaes at 381-7893 or email him at tmpddare@aol.com

At Murray and Beyond: RADAR

What is RADAR? RADAR is a community coalition committed to reducing the use of alcohol, drugs and other harmful substances by youth in our Town. RADAR facilitates changing societal norms through the use of multiple research-based strategies to help local youth make healthy choices and avoid substance abuse and other unhealthy behaviors. Janet Buchbinder is RADAR's Coordinator and President. Its advisory board is comprised of leaders from many sectors across our Larchmont-Mamaroneck

community, including district staff members Dr. Anthony Minotti, Dr. Seth Weitzman, Helene Fremder and Vince Minotti. Murray mom Cecilia Absher is RADAR's treasurer, and fellow Murray mom Ximena Francella serves on RADAR's advisory board.

What Does RADAR Do? RADAR, in partnership with many sectors in our community, works via three main areas, all aimed at creating an environment in which our youth can thrive free of drug and alcohol use. Through speaker programs, use of surveys and research, and its website

(www.LMRADAR.org), RADAR educates adults and youth about the dangers of drug and underage alcohol use and builds greater awareness of how our community is affected by this important issue.

RADAR also works to reduce availability of alcohol to teens. It does so through campaigns such as the "Parents Who Host, Lose the Most"; training programs for business establishments (including private clubs and restaurants) aimed at avoiding serving alcohol to underage people; a recent "Sticker Shock" campaign led by students to publicly advise stores not to sell alcohol to minors; and by advocating for stronger laws and policies, such as the social host law and use of party patrols and compliance checks by law enforcement officers.

Importantly, RADAR is dedicated to developing greater capacity for parents and their children to navigate the teen years in a drug and alcohol free way. Through promoting the importance of family time, staying connected with teens and proactive parenting, RADAR helps parents guide their children and aid in their positive development. RADAR partners with our school district, local houses of worship, our municipalities and many other community sectors to help youth succeed, from sponsoring after-school teen recreational opportunities to supporting research-based educational programs to help teens develop better decision-making skills and withstand peer pressures. By strengthening our community's understanding of the challenges our teens face, creating greater awareness of the harmful impact of substance use, as well as working together to increase substance-free recreational opportunities, RADAR is working to create a more cohesive and supportive environment in which our youth can thrive.

RADAR's Recent Accomplishments & Activities: RADAR has been active in many areas this past year. To educate parents about the use of alcohol and drugs by teens in our community, RADAR held a parent forum this spring featuring nationally known drug and alcohol expert Mike Nerney.

Radar also hosted a community leadership summit at which many of our dedicated Partners worked to understand the risk factors giving rise to our teens' high use of drugs and alcohol.

This spring RADAR helped facilitate a "Sticker Shock" campaign where students visited retailers selling alcohol and posted stickers proclaiming it is illegal to sell alcohol to minors. RADAR supported "Staying Connected" workshops for parents of teens and co-sponsored a very successful after school event for MHS students. Teens, actively involved in planning impact events, are now part of the RADAR advisory board. From promoting Family Day and the importance of family dinner and conversation to developing avenues for parents to connect with each other and create support networks, RADAR is actively building our community's capacity to help prevent teen substance use.

RADAR is already planning activities and much important work for the upcoming school year. Please learn more about RADAR's endeavors and support its efforts to keep children healthy.

What Can You Do? - Visit RADAR online at www.LMRADAR.org. Get involved – even while your children are in elementary school! Add yourself to RADAR's email list to obtain useful information and news about RADAR at work in our community – sign up on its homepage at <http://www.lmradar.org/>. Get a RADAR cling decal and display on your car window. To obtain one, email Janet Buchbinder at Jntmcb@aol.com or call 834-6041. Volunteer to help RADAR carry out its mission and implement important initiatives that will benefit you and your children. To join, email Cecilia Absher at ctabsher@att.net or Janet Buchbinder at Jntmcb@aol.com.

September through December – Calendar Highlights			
Day	Date	Time	Event
Tuesday	Sept 8	8:40-11:45am 9:00-10:45am	First Day of School Kindergarten & New Parents Coffees
Wednesday	Sept 9	8:40-2:30pm	First Full Day of School (Kindergarten AM only)
Friday	Sept 11	3.30-4.30pm	Fall Social for Families & Teachers
Monday	Sept 21	6:30pm 7:15pm 7:45pm	Murray Back to School Night (K – Gr. 2) K & Gr. 1 in Classrooms All /in Auditorium Gr. 2 in Classrooms
Tues & Wed	Sept 22-23		Murray School Photos Days
Thursday	Sept 24	2:30pm	Full Day Kindergarten Begins
Friday	Sept 25	8:30 & 9:15am	PTA Volunteer Fair and Meeting
Monday	Sept 28		NO SCHOOL -Yom Kippur
Tuesday	Sept 29	6:30pm 7:15pm 7:45pm	Murray Back to School Night (Gr. 3-5) Gr. 3 & Gr. 4 in classrooms All in Auditorium Gr. 5 in classroom
Mon - Fri	October 5-9		Fall Walk to School Week
Monday	Oct 12		NO SCHOOL- Columbus Day
Thursday	Oct 22	8:40-11:30am All Day	Parent Visiting Morning Bake Sale
Thursday	Oct 22	7:30pm	Murray Orchestra Learn to Play Night
Friday	Oct 23	2:45pm	Emergency Dismissal
Tuesday	Nov 3	11:30am	Early Dismissal Conferences
Thursday	Nov 5	7:30pm	All Elementary Workshop - Staying Connected with Your Child
Wednesday	Nov 11		NO SCHOOL - Veterans Day
Mon - Wed	Nov 16 – 19		Murray Book Fair
Wednesday	Nov 25	1:00pm	Early Dismissal Thanksgiving
Thurs - Fri	Nov 26 - 27		NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving
Wednesday	Dec 2	8:40-11:30am	Early Dismissal Conferences
Wednesday	Dec 9	7:30pm	Murray Winter Concert
	Dec 21-Jan 1		NO SCHOOL – Holiday Recess